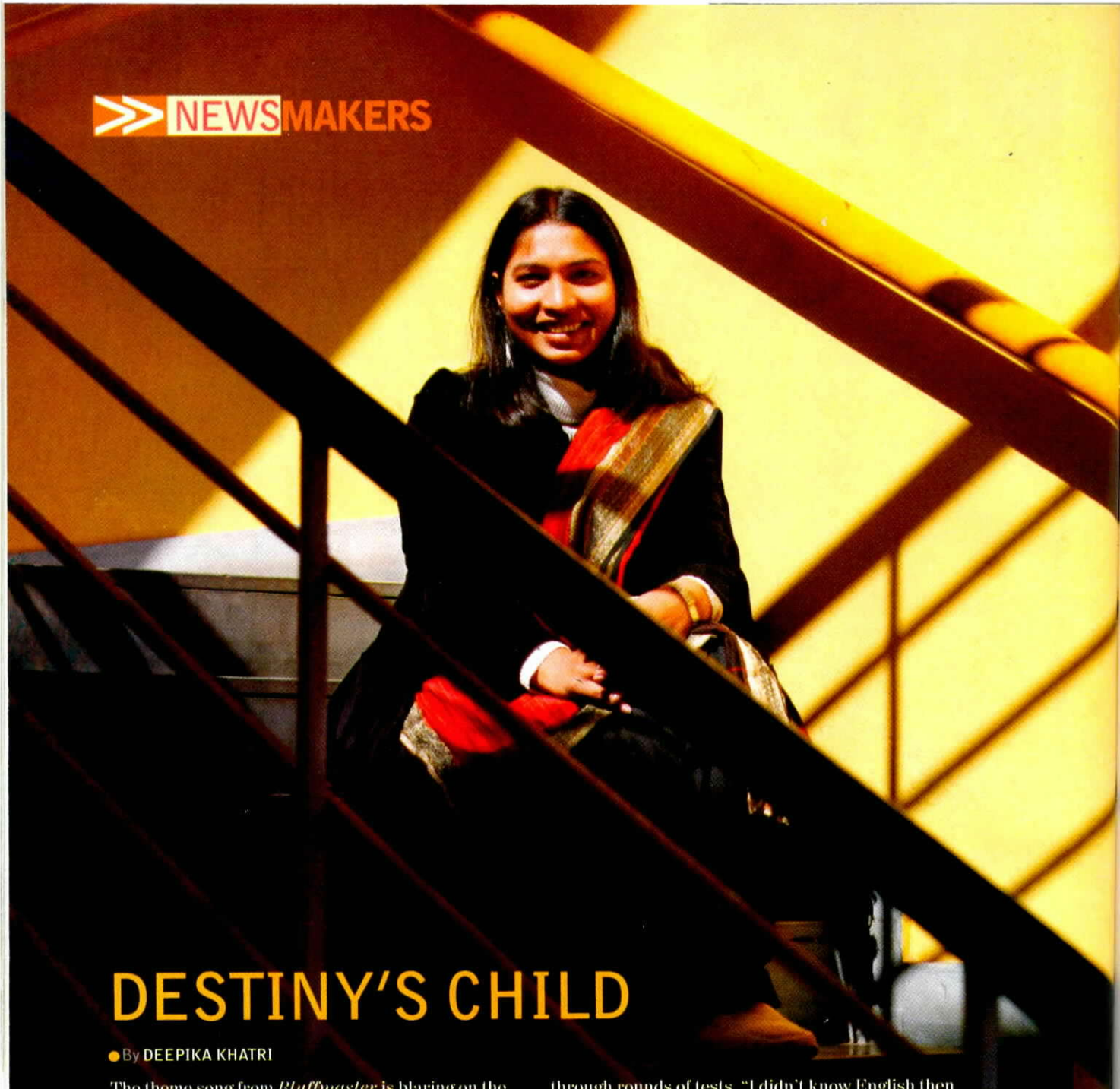


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DESTINY'S CHILD

● By DEEPIKA KHATRI

The theme song from *Bluffmaster* is blaring on the CD player and 26-year-old **Grace Albert** joins Akshat and Saurabh as they show off their favourite moves—a mixture of balle-balle and hip-hop. Growing up in Meerut, Albert never imagined she would work as a dance movement therapist with Muskaan, a Delhi-based ngo that works with mentally challenged teenagers and adults.

“My family was not economically well-off but from the time I was in school, I earned my education by getting scholarships,” she says. An honours student, Albert was studying dance from the Navsadhana Kala Kendra in Varanasi when she was recommended for the Ford Foundation’s International Fellowship Programme. What followed was a whirlwind of gut-clenching nervousness as Albert went

through rounds of tests. “I didn’t know English then and couldn’t even fill out my forms. It was embarrassing,” says the woman who now speaks the language without a trace of hesitation.

Admission to a three year programme in dance movement therapy at the Antioch New England Graduate School, US, meant more hard work. “I was studying in a foreign language for the first time and it was very hard. I didn’t even know the basics like how to type or to use the email,” she says. But Albert decided to stick it out and a one-year internship in the US working with cancer and tumour affected children helped when she returned to India. “I’ve started a new department at Muskaan—expressive art therapy and it’s a great feeling when the children respond,” she says.